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ABSTRACT

The history and modernization of the French nursery and elementary schools are the focal points of this review of educational trends in France. One major section discussed the "Ecole Maternelle", kindergarten, nursery schools, the "Jardin d'Enfants", and new math. Another section treats: (1) "Les Ecoles Primaires", (2) village schools, (3) the school teacher, (4) the French "laicite", (5) "instituteurs" of the Third Republic, (6) the museum and school at Bourges, and (7) the Freinet school. A bibliography and summary of theses defended at the Sorbonne are provided. (RL)

education in France

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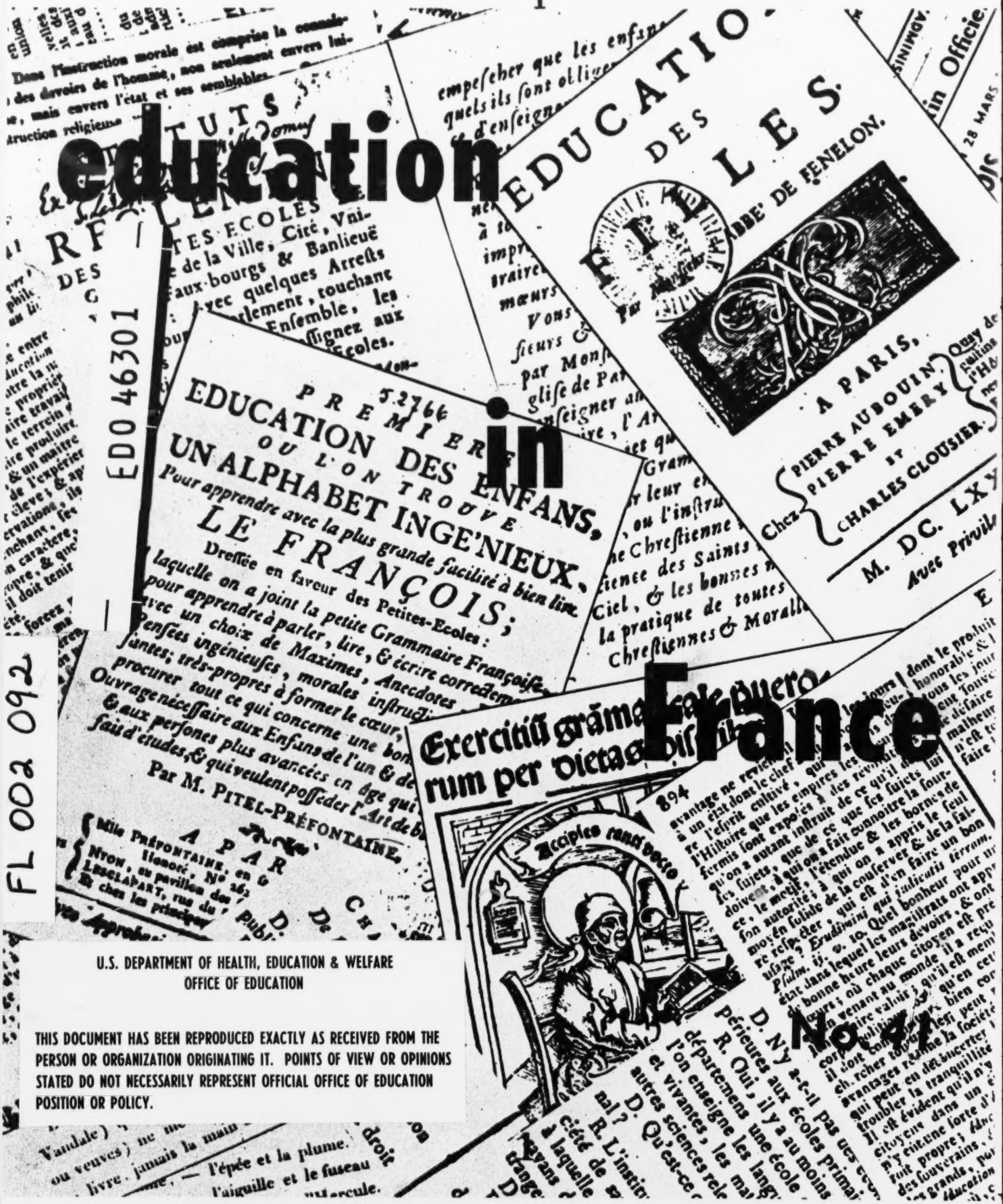
EDUCATION
DES
FILLES.
PAR M. L'ABBE' DE FENELON.
A PARIS,
Chez PIERRE AUBOUIN, PIERRE EMERY ET CHARLES CLOUSIER.
M. DC. LXX
Avec Privile
PREMIERE
EDUCATION DES ENFANS,
OU L'ON TROUVE
UN ALPHABET INGE'NIEUX,
Pour apprendre avec la plus grande facilité à bien lire
LE FRANÇOIS;
Dressée en faveur des Petites-Ecoles:
laquelle on a joint la petite Grammaire Françoise
pour apprendre à parler, lire, & écrire correctement
avec un choix de Maximes, Anecdotes
pensées ingénieuses, morales instructives
procurer tout ce qui concerne une bonne
Ouvrage nécessaire aux Enfans de l'un & de
& aux personnes plus avancées en âge qui
fait d'études, & qui veulent posséder l'Art de
Par M. PITEL-PRÉFONTAINE.
A PAR
Mlle PRÉFONTAINE, en sa
Nyon, au pavillon des
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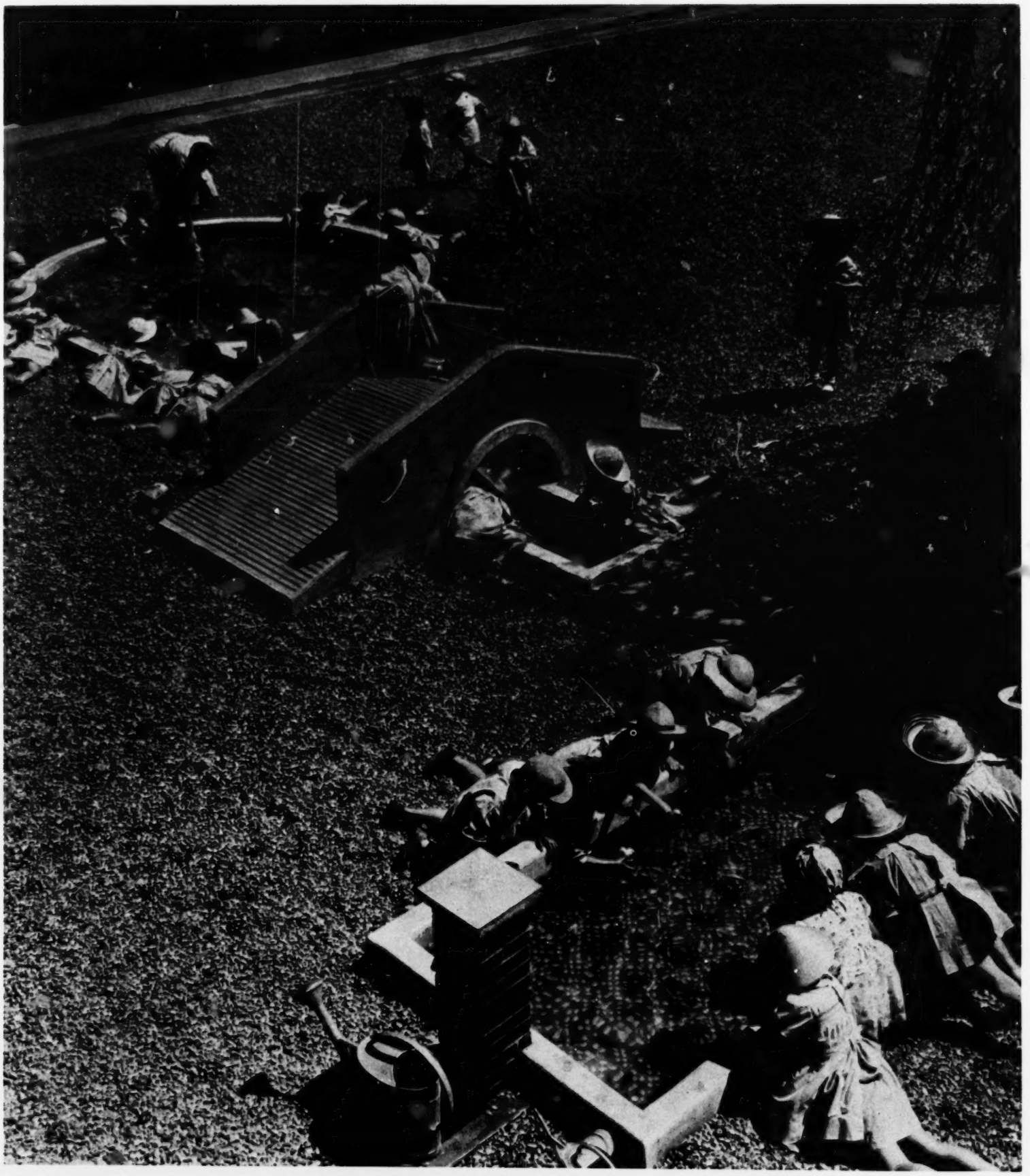


ALBI : Jeux à l'Ecole Maternelle

PRESCHOOL EDUCATION IN FRANCE

L'ECOLE MATERNELLE

L'"Ecole maternelle" in France encompasses more than the American kindergarten since it enrolls children of both sexes between the ages of two and six. It is open to all and free and it is not obligatory. The only prerequisites are to be two years old at least and to have had the necessary vaccinations.

The children are divided according to age and level of development into three sections :

- the first section comprises children from 2 to 4 years;
- the second section comprises children from 4 to 5 years;
- the third section is for children from 5 to 6 years.

However, when too many classes are necessary which is the case in larger cities, the method of grouping may vary according to the decision of the Director of the school.

Daily attendance is not required at the "ecole maternelle" and being late is no sin. In fact, staggered arrival of children is the general rule. Children come if and when they so desire. Pauline Kergomard who was a pioneer of preschool education in France used to say that "Nursery school should accept the children of working mothers at an early hour but they should also welcome children who want nothing more than playmates". Because of the quality of its personnel and its installations, the French nursery school has been well received by the public : 90% of the children from 5 to 6 attend it, 85% of the 4 year old children and 51% of the 3 year olds.

Classes enfantines and Jardins d'enfants

The name of "écoles maternelles" in France is reserved for establishments operated by the municipalities. When a town has less than 1200 inhabitants, they are replaced by a similar kind of school annexed to an elementary school, generally the girls school. This kind of school has only one class but the requisites are the same and the children receive the same education by the same methods.

The "écoles maternelles" are organized and financed by the State. Their existence is not obligatory but may be requested by the town. The creation of a school once decided, the town is committed to assume during ten years the expenses and upkeep of the school. The State has the charge of the salary of the teachers.

Apart from these nursery schools which are municipal and free, private nursery schools may be opened by philanthropic organizations, industrial firms or individuals. They are then called "Jardins d'enfants". Their organization and their financing is in the charge of the people who found them. But the State still exercises control over health through inspections similar to those exercised in public schools.

The "école maternelle" in France has both a social and educational goal. In order to meet the needs of the families, it must adjust to local conditions : it opens and closes according with the working hours of factories and offices in its vicinity. It is educational because it provides to all children air and light, toys and special educational equipment, sand and water, and even, except in big cities, a garden.

(Photo I.P.N., Jean Suquet)

The "école maternelle" compensates for family deficiencies whatever the cause : it concerns itself with health matters, cleanliness, clothing, provides meals and rest periods. Generally speaking, it furnishes all the care that a young child needs and often does not receive at home.

Health inspections are also very important. An office is provided in the school for the visits of the school doctor and in many municipalities, a social worker assists the Director and the doctor in all questions concerning general development and health. The kindergartens play an important role in the early discovery of problems in development of behavior : sensory or motor deficiencies, problems in language or personality, etc.

Activities in the "école maternelle"

Section I (2 to 4 years)

1) sensory motor activities : water and sand games, construction, filling receptacles, games of skill or balance, playing with dolls, manual and housekeeping activities.

2) development of sensitivity : songs and stories, rhythm, dance.

3) first intellectual education : exercises in order, sorting, speech.

Section II (4 to 5 years)

1) sensory education : imitation games, housekeeping activities, more advanced sensory education in free or suggested creative activities, methodical exercises in memory or attention.

2) education in sensitivity : broader and more numerous means of expression by means of rhythm, dance, drawing, but also words and poetry.

3) intellectual education : first exercises in observation and speech, first intuitive experiments with numbers.

Section III (5 to 6 years)

1) use of themes taken from the environment, from accounts of trips and from stories. The children already possess numerous means of expression which they use freely : song and dance, modeling and drawing, dramatic games and games with marionettes.

2) manual activities illustrating themes of activities.

3) sensitivity training is done primarily through music and poetry, to which children of this age are already quite sensitive: also through drawing, through observation of works of art, painting, sculpture, etc.

4) intellectual education : precision in observation and in written and oral expression. First exercises in calculation.

5) first initiation into fundamental techniques : reading, writing, and arithmetic are offered to those children who are interested and capable.

Achievements and problems of the "école maternelle"

The French kindergarten is undoubtedly a factor in social assimilation because it brings together children of different backgrounds. However there remains a number of problems.

First, as in all French education, enrollment problems and financial problems. Enrollment problems because 1.300,000 children of the ages of 2 to 3 years are expected in the nursery school by 1972. Classes are already overcrowded with an average of 40 children per class and in the big cities 45 or 50. Improving these conditions is thus urgent. Overcrowded classes are incompatible with a meaningful education of very young children. This comes first in the provisions of the Sixth National Development Plan concerning pre-school education.

Then related to the increase in the number of children is the problem of finding teachers. Monsieur Olivier Guichard, Minister of National Education, recently proposed to entrust the nursery schools to "educational aides" instead of the present instructors who have had the same training as the teachers in Elementary schools. This proposal has raised violent protests from the National Union of Teachers as well as from parent associations. Their representatives are unanimous in recalling that "the span between 2 and 6 years represents the enormity of a geological period in the lifetime of a man". The period around 3 years is particularly important because at this age a child's various capacities of expression start to develop in relation with social and cultural environment. Professor Zazzo of the Laboratory of the psycho-biology of the child, concluded : "it is not by putting the children in day care centers that one will give them equal opportunities. It is important to give a broadened environment and for this a highly trained teacher is indispensable".

PRESCHOOL EDUCATION
IN FRANCE AND IN THE UNITED STATES

	Etats-Unis		France	
	total population	percentage enrolled	total population	percentage enrolled
2 ans			851.000	13%
3 ans	3.811.000	8.3%	863.000	51%
4 ans	4.000.000	22.8%	855.000	85%
5 ans	4.095.000	66 %	828.000	99.1%

According to the STATISTICAL ABSTRACT 1969 and STATISTIQUES DE L'EDUCATION NATIONALE 1969.

3

THEIR FUTURE BEGINS IN KINDERGARTEN

Social disparities in the educational process still prevail in France : in 1938-39 only 1.4% of working class children reached college level. In 1966 while this figure increased somewhat, it is still around 10%.

It is also noticeable that this inequality appears first in the early grades : one out of three working class children repeats these grades as compared to one out of 16 for the sons of white-collar workers, professionals and executives.

It is therefore **before** the preparatory courses, in the preschool classes that something must be done because starting off with a failure and the loss of classmates can be serious blows to a child's personality.

What exactly are the causes of this failure? Of this inequality from the start?

1) One thinks immediately of language and ease in verbal expression. This is already a considerable inequality.

2) But the sociologists see an even more subtle inequality : that of a transmission of "codes", of a substratum common to both children from middle or upperclass homes and to their teachers and from which are excluded the children from rural and working-class families.

It is said that without reaching quite the extremes of certain countries such as Greece, there are really two languages in France, one a scholarly language and one a popular language, each having its own vocabulary and syntax. For certain children, the language spoken in school is in effect their native tongue in which

Extracts from an article by Dr. Dennis Wallon published in "Education et Developpement," January 1970.

they feel at ease, while for others it will always be something they have to learn.

The danger is that the unfortunate child who has difficulty expressing himself orally, especially in front of his peers, will no longer make the effort and therefore fall even farther behind.

It even seems that in certain suburban schools, after a year or two of confusion, the Portuguese or North African children express themselves better than their French comrades because they have only learned the scholarly language and cannot confuse it with another form of the same language spoken at home.

The kindergarten can noticeably mitigate these handicaps, teach children a more correct and a more varied speech than they hear at home giving them the exact form or the correct word if they have difficulty expressing themselves.

3) Finally, there is possibly another great inequality in the development of the personality, either in the underprivileged classes where parents do not know when to begin the child's education or in other cases where the child is in the care of nurses or in day-care centers and remains too long in an infantile state.

These three causes merit further examination and a closer look to see in what way the kindergarten might attenuate this inequality and play a role of real "democratization" in the first two or three years during which the child is in its care.

Language

Inequality in speech is the most evident. Some statistics were gathered with parental cooperation pertaining to vocabulary : they show that the levels of language development can go from 1200 words for Emmanuelle (3 years) from a cultivated background whose mother talks a lot, to 300 or 350 words for Patrick (3 years, 6 months), youngest of three children whose mother is overworked, whose family life is difficult, and whose father returns after Patrick has gone to bed.

The difference in levels of syntax is even greater. Patrick, to whom no one ever said anything but "fiche le camp de là" (get out of my way), or "depêche toi" (hurry up), and to whom no one has ever taken the time to tell stories or to answer questions with more than two or three words, could not have a very rich syntax.

The Codes

In this disparity which begins in the kindergarten, a non verbal preknowledge seems to play a role, a common ground between the more well-to-do children and the teachers. There is then a hierarchy of these languages : a child of well-

to-do family feels secure knowing that the language spoken in his home is the correct one, while a child of a poor family can feel traumatized when realizing that when he speaks as his mother speaks it is considered to be "bad language".

The same cultural "codes" exist on a purely esthetical level : visual creations, clay models and ceramics made by children who have been exposed at home to various esthetic criteria or who were encouraged to create even before kindergarten have better chances to agree with the teacher's own criteria and taste because they relate to a similar esthetic. Hanging their pictures obviously on the wall may well discourage a child who had put his heart into something "conventional". It is up to the teachers to consider these effects and try to be eclectic.

The affective or functional level

Of course there are brooding and awkward children in the most comfortable environments. But it takes less time to feed a child than to let him use the spoon himself, to change his diapers than to toilet-train him, to dress him rather than to let him dress himself, to have the patience to let him learn for himself. Hence, there are many more children from underprivileged homes that come to the kindergarten awkward and not having acquired autonomy. It is up to the kindergarten to attenuate this social inequality.

These appear to be little things, but it is these little things that make a child feel that he is a failure. This is indeed a serious problem. Not only must he repeat his first grades starting out much too soon with a feeling of defeat but if he has tried hard, he will have the impression that it is not fair, that it is not really his fault.

Any serious error committed in the kindergartens in 1970 will leave its effects on the children who reach higher levels of study between 1982 and 1985. Mr. Edgar Faure, former Minister of National Education, stated the problem very well : "It is between the ages of 2 and 6 years that the battle for democratization of the educational system will be lost or won. The kindergarten, a basic instrument of social justice, is alone capable of compensating a little for the basic inequality inherent in social origin". (Interview in the **Figaro**, January 8, 1969)

EARLY NURSERY SCHOOLS IN FRANCE

The first kindergarten in France seems to have been the "knitting school", founded by Pastor Oberlin in the Alsacian village of Waldesbach in 1771.

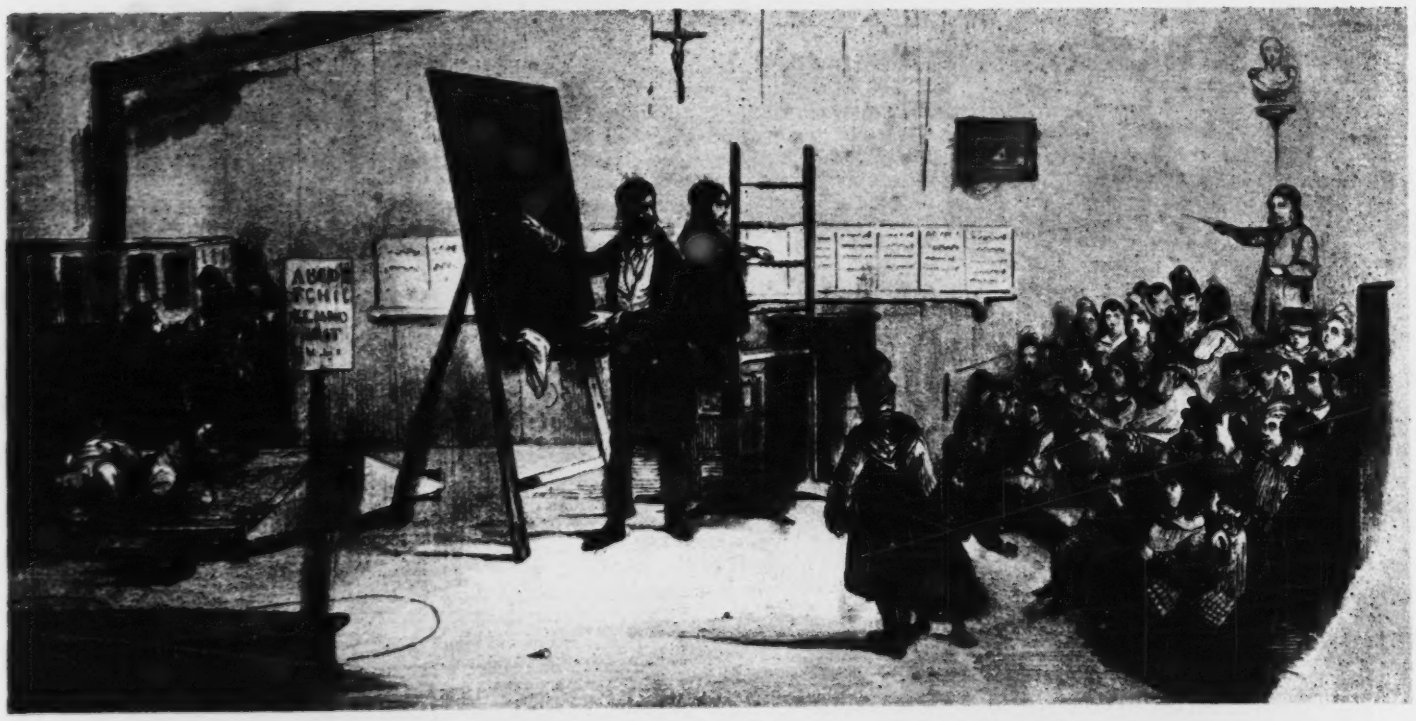
In 1825 the first "infant room" was opened in Paris for children of working mothers. Twenty years later, there were 1500 in France which enrolled about 100,000 children. These schools were private at first and existed on charity, then came under the control of the towns and finally under that of the Ministry of Education. In 1848, an official decree declared that the "infant rooms", improperly named charitable institutions, were to be establishments of public education, and would be called "écoles maternelles".

The kindergarten began with a very simple program. "I teach them what I know", said one teacher in an "infant room", "Geography, Natural History, History of the Bible. Then we knit and sing hymns..." In 1837, an ordinance fixed a general program of study :

> "The first elements of religious instruction"
>
> "Elementary reading, writing and arithmetic, instructive and moral songs, needlework and handicrafts".

In 1847, the first Ecole Normale was founded in Paris to train kindergarten teachers. The director was for 27 years Mrs. Pape-Charpentier, a great educator, who proceeded to write lesson books on geography, history and natural sciences.

A new decree in 1887 established the present-day kindergarten program, including manual exercises, educational games, song and rhythm, moral instruction, exercises in language, stories, drawing, reading and arithmetic.



LE JARDIN D'ENFANTS

Le *jardin d'enfants* like the école maternelle takes in children from two to six years. Its goals and activities are the same as those of the école maternelle. The only difference is that the école maternelle is under the responsibility of the city and the control of the Ministry of National Education, while the *jardin d'enfants* is a private establishment. Anyone can start a *jardin d'enfants*, starting with the *jardinières*, although they rarely have the means. A group of parents, however, may get together and open a jardin d'enfants and pay the *jardinières* themselves. The authorization to do this comes from the Prefect, with the approval of the director of the Department of Health. The request should be accompanied by the plans of the proposed site and a list of the staff.

The *jardinières* were the exception until after the First World War, and even today they have no defined status. A certain number of *jardins d'enfants* were created by public or semi-public organizations : Ministries, municipalities, low-rent housing projects, family allowance funds, Public Welfare, the S.N.C.F.(railroad). But the better part of them were privately initiated : by the Red Cross and other similar institutions, or by individuals.

The *jardinières d'enfants* must have a diploma from a school approved by the Minister of Health. There are many such schools and they are conceived to meet the particular needs of each region. There is thus much diversity in both the training of the *jardinières* and their status within

the profession. This diversity has one inconvenience. The salaries are unequal and generally inferior to those of the instructors in the écoles maternelles which educate children of the same age. The *jardinières* should be at least nineteen years old and the headmistress at least twenty-one.

What is the role of the *jardinière d' enfants?* Essentially that of a guardian, because she is replacing the working mother. She begins school usually at nine o' clock, but in the factory areas she may begin at 7 or 7:30. However, she usually works no more than 30 hours a week and takes care of no more than 20 children.

Her main role is that of educator : to make the child happy in a pleasant environment, to introduce him to the world, to initiate him into artistic and manual activities, and to encourage him to join group activities.

As we have seen, the *jardinières* must have a diploma from an approved school, but there is no State diploma. All the training schools are private. A large number of them have been regrouped in the Association of Training Centers for Jardinières, while others are part of the National Union of Jardins d'Enfants. Both organizations are based in the Paris suburbs. There are also independent establishments, the collège Sevigné being one of the oldest.

For all of these schools an examination is required for admission. Candidates must be 18 years of age and have an academic background equivalent to the French baccalauréat.

The course of study takes two years and includes theoretical background and practice-teaching. The courses include child psychology, methods of teaching, familial and social legislation and all the activities that the teacher will have to direct : exercises in observation, educational and outdoor games,painting, singing, dance, rhythm, stories, etc.

In-service training is done in a *jardin d'enfants* or nursery school. Visits are also made to new schools, fresh-air schools, and crêches for children under two.

In addition, there are special courses for teachers who will work in crêches or in schools for handicapped children.

A specialized course for *jardinières de crêche* was organized in 1961 and is accessible to students who want an education oriented toward the teaching of children under two. These courses are offered only in certain schools. The first year of study is the same for all students, but during the second year, those that choose this area of specialization practice, teach in a crêche and follow courses in the psycho-pedagogy of the very young.

LEARNING THE NEW MATH

This is one of the classes in the Teacher-Training College in Amiens. All of these children, from kindergarten to second grade (21 classes, 600 pupils), are initiated into and receive instruction in modern math. They use sticks for individual exercises in numbers and counting and in making geometric forms. They also learn logic by various means such as blindfolding a child to make him think clearly.

"Children at a very early age already have a conception of logic and mathematical principles," wrote Mr. Ravuz, one of the promoters of modern math. "They don't know how to express them verbally, but they reveal them through games. One early finds the seeds of ideas that modern mathematicians used at the beginning of the century". Even in kindergarten, children learn to use the words **together**, **belong**, and **relation**.

"These experiments pose the problem of training teachers," declared Mrs. Manesse, the training school's director." The teachers now are volunteers who went through retraining, but tomorrow's teachers will have benefited from this new training." To assure the success of this program, there must be a strong sense of team spirit among educators at all levels. This is the case at Amiens, where the Directeur, Mr. Mallet, and the School Inspector, the principals, the director of the Training College help the teachers who are willing to experiment.

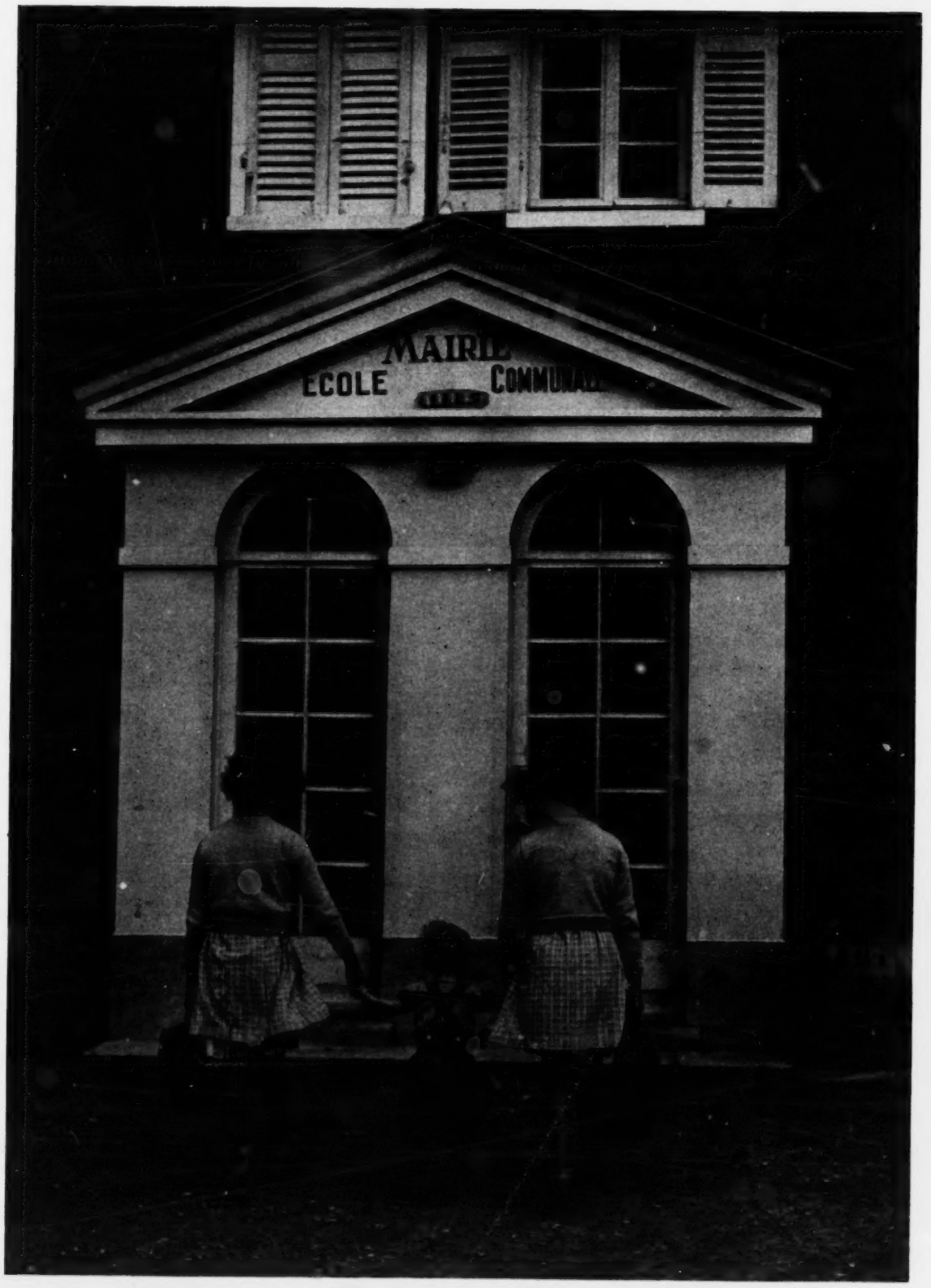
Renovation of educational methods is a subject of many speculations in France. The Minister of National Education recently revealed new experiments to the public. Such experiments are being undertaken at the Academy of Amiens on modern Math. Teachers here, starting in kindergarten, are also using closed-circuit television.

Of course, some of these new methods are being used elsewhere. The principles are the same, but each teacher adjusts them to his own pupils' needs.

Thirty boys and girls are seated in a semicircle. On the floor the teacher has painted some geometric shapes (circles, squares and triangles) in three colors. These are the "houses". She will show the children how to conceive the idea of similarity on this pattern : "this is the same color as ...."

Catherine is in a blue "house" - a circle. Where will she go if she wants to stay in a blue house? After a slight hesitation she chooses the blue square, then the blue triangle. The other children, when they are ready to join the game, take Catherine's place. They do the same exercise at the blackboard, the principle being to progress from the concrete to the abstract.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION



LES ECOLES PRIMAIRES

Organization of Classes

Elementary education is divided into "cours élémentaires" (7 to 9 years) and "cours moyens" (9 to 11 years). Children must be at least six years old to enter the preparatory courses. Exceptions are made by the school superintendent for precocious children.

The preparatory courses being the first year of formal schooling, it is not uncommon for a large number of children to repeat this first year. This phenomenon in a serious problem in elementary education in France. It is in large part due to adjustment problems the children encounter upon leaving kindergarten, where they they were exposed to greater freedom and progressive methods. Thus, in the first grade the child encounters a new discipline and is forced to learn to read at 6, which is often too young. Studies are being made to alter the elementary system and to bridge the gap between kindergarten and the "preparatory" courses.

The School and the Municipalities

Elementary schools are subsidized by both State and towns. The Ministry of Education provides teachers' salaries and determines programs and curricula. The municipalities provide buildings, premises and running expenses, with some help from the State in certain cases. In order to open a new school, a town receives $16,000 per class which covers 80% of the building expenses. Their financial contribution, however, weighs heavily on the budget of the small-size villages.

Elementary education is the same for all children in France regardless of their ultimate academic goals. It is obligatory for children from 6 to 11 years, and is offered in primary schools, boys' schools, girls' schools or mixed schools. Today there are about 5 million pupils in 70,000 elementary schools, of which 60,000 are public.

Enrollment has been steadily decreasing these last few years. One cause is the reform in the educational system which is gradually doing away with the top grades in the elementary school which used to educate pupils from 12 to 14 who only wanted to complete the required years. Since the school-leaving age is 16, all children enter the "classe de sixième" at 12. Accordingly, this year the elementary school population has decreased by some 100,000.

While the number of pupils decreases, the number of teachers has increased from 170,000 in 1964 to 191,000 in 1968. This is due in part to the migration of people from the country to the city and to the construction of new suburbs which in turn necessitates new schools and new teachers. Sometimes it is difficult to regroup children from widely separated villages in one central school. Difficulties in transportation, especially in winter, make it necessary to keep some village schools open for 5 or 6 children, and the teacher is reduced to the situation of private tutor.

MOLSHEIM (Alsace) - Une petite école de village

VILLAGE SCHOOLS IN THE "OTHER FRANCE"

In France today there are still more than 7,000 schools with an enrollment of only 15 students or less. Although this is surprising in an era of rapid concentration, it is one of the consequences of depopulation in the rural areas.

In this article the question is raised: is the maintenance of rural schools pedagogical nonsense and their suppression only a local tragedy? Is it the school which brought life to the community or is it disappearing along with the village? According to the National Union of Teachers, the small country school is a result, not a cause.

If we, as adults, are sentimentally attached to our old schools with their blackened desks, our children are not : they prefer the new, modern school. Their future, their interests are not in the rural school which in effect is not beneficial to them, in spite of the services it renders. They need better institutions, with ample means and a pedagogical team that is more stable than the non-qualified substitutes sent to the country with nothing but good intentions and imagination.

There remains the problem of the isolated villages in which the children cannot be regrouped because of poor transportation or because they are inaccessible most of the year. There, the school with limited enrollment should be preserved. Elsewhere, these schools, remnants of the past, will disappear.

The following are excerpts from the impressions of two teachers who speak of their teaching experience in the mountain areas of the Massif Central, in which they encountered extreme conditions. The excerpts are taken from a radio broadcast by Eliane Victor entitles "Les Femmes Aussi" and from last year's best seller "Institutrice du Village" by Huguette Bastide.

- School is a pompous title for the one in the village of Coudon (20 miles from Carcassonne, in the département de l'Aude). There are only three pupils, three girls of 7, 9 and 11 years. The town is dying, the town is dead. Eighty-five inhabitants. All old people. The teacher, a young man of twenty is the fourth replacement since the beginning of the year. Full of good intentions, he stated ; "Evidently this class is monotonous. I feel as if I am living in the nineteenth century and am a sort of preceptor. But I know that it is not permanent. After all, it is a way of learning one's profession, and since I have no basic training..."

- These rural teachers are all between 19 and 22 years. Degree in hand, they are told to work things out for themselves. Senior teachers don't want to be placed in lost villages. Then, the positions are offered to the replacements who accept for lack of anything better. "A little purgatory through which many of us have passed", said a pedagogical counselor to Huguette Bastide, who is dismayed by the lack of conveniences in the schools. No water, no sink, and the toilet facilities in the garden.

- Here in Coudon, the town made a special effort : they installed a washroom and repainted the walls. Only one important omission: the heating, so that the teacher prefers to drive home every evening, even though driving conditions may be hazardous in the winter. The second hand car which he bought, in spite of the minimal salaries, holds a place of utmost priority. It permits a daily escape, toward a world less closed in upon itself. Thus, the teacher in these micro-communities loses his role as extra-curricular helper and counselor. He is only available during working hours.

Certain teachers display, however, a real aptitude for teaching in a rural area. An example is the woman, who is an archeologist in her spare time, whom I met in a village of Corbières which has 118 inhabitants. She has seven pupils. "There is a lot of work to do", she says, "The children have never left their homes, have never taken a train, have never seen the ocean. Here I am privileged, the classroom is clean, I have a projector and a record player; I can open their eyes on the world. They are interested..."

But to take care of seven pupils of different ages and different levels is a task difficult even for a juggler.

The young woman continues : "The spirit of emulation is lacking, and I have a tendency to force, without realizing it, the maturity of a pupil alone in his class. It is not easy to find the right level. I often ask more of a child than he is capable of giving. Having no real points of reference, I cannot react before seven children of different mentalities as before twenty students unified by the same need, by the same goal.

In spite of the efforts of the teacher, group life, social exchange, in these small classes are reduced to the barest minimum. In another small school of four students, isolated from the city, a young teacher recounts her difficulties to me : "They (the children) don't express themselves. I sometimes have the impression that they are closed within themselves. So I try to stimulate discussion. I talk to them of the conquest of space. They open their eyes in wonder. Anyway, next year the school is closing. For them it will surely be a good thing. They will no longer be isolated."

To maintain the school at any expense in these conditions seems like nonsense, but for the village it is a crisis. In all of the rural regions, the school is the symbol of life. The farmers, the mayors, the town council are all deeply concerned. Even if the process of abandonment is irreversible, they still hold tightly to the small room with the old desks. The village is definitely condemned. No young people would ever want to settle there. Someone told me of a mayor who, in order to hold onto his hamlet, searched the country to hire forest rangers with large families to live there. Another mayor from the Cévennes went down to Carcassonne to confront the District Superintendent of Schools. "If you close my school", he said, "I'll stay right here." "But look here, Mr. Mayor", replied the Superintendent, "you only have two pupils." The mayor stood firm and explained that his two pupils could not be sent elsewhere. The Superintendent yielded and gave him another substitute teacher.

To use teachers for two, three or five pupils while urban classes are overcrowded is evidently an anachronistic situation. But one would have to be very careful in getting to the heart of the matter. In effect there are places that are virtually cut off from everything during the winter, and for which no other solution is possible. Further, one runs up against small-town hostility in these questions of regroupings, which does not facilitate matters. How does one decide that one town is more valuable than another? The people in Bellavis say : "Why go to Anibias? Why don't the people from Anibias come here?" Then the problem becomes political : the local District Representative wants to please those who elected him.

In fact, as a recent report from the National Union of Teachers states, it is more of a social question than an educational one. The small umber of classes in the rural areas is the consequence of the death of the village, not the cause. For the moment there is a tendency to look at the problem through the wrong end of the telescope. The closing down of a school is done to create a post elsewhere where it is needed. No one as yet is looking at the problem as a whole. No studies have been made to find other structures for the rural school. To regroup the children from three or four towns in the one that seems the most interesting requires the intervention of a sociologist or a geographer. Also required, and this is where the greatest problem lies, are an adequate system of transportation, a supervised cafeteria during lunchtime, new personnel; in brief, conditions that the Minister of National Education would have to provide for.

One fact is certain : that is, that a child entering seventh grade having come from a rural school is decidedly less prepared than the child from the city. He is disadvantaged in two ways : 1) he participates, due to the circumstances, in a very restricted group life; 2) he does not benefit from the opening onto the world that is provided by the kindergarten. This factor needs further study. Specialists emphasize the role of the kindergarten as being of the utmost importance. The figures speak for themselves in regard to the underprivileged areas. There are, for the whole department of Lozère, only seven kindergartens: twelve in the High Alps; thirteen in the Creuse; eighteen in the Cantal. In the village, a child cannot attend school until he is five years old. This is another reason why he cannot come to know life outside of his own home. Of course the data in all these situations are extremely complex. But they must be carefully considered. These village children deserve as large a share of the cake as the city children.

THE SCHOOLTEACHER

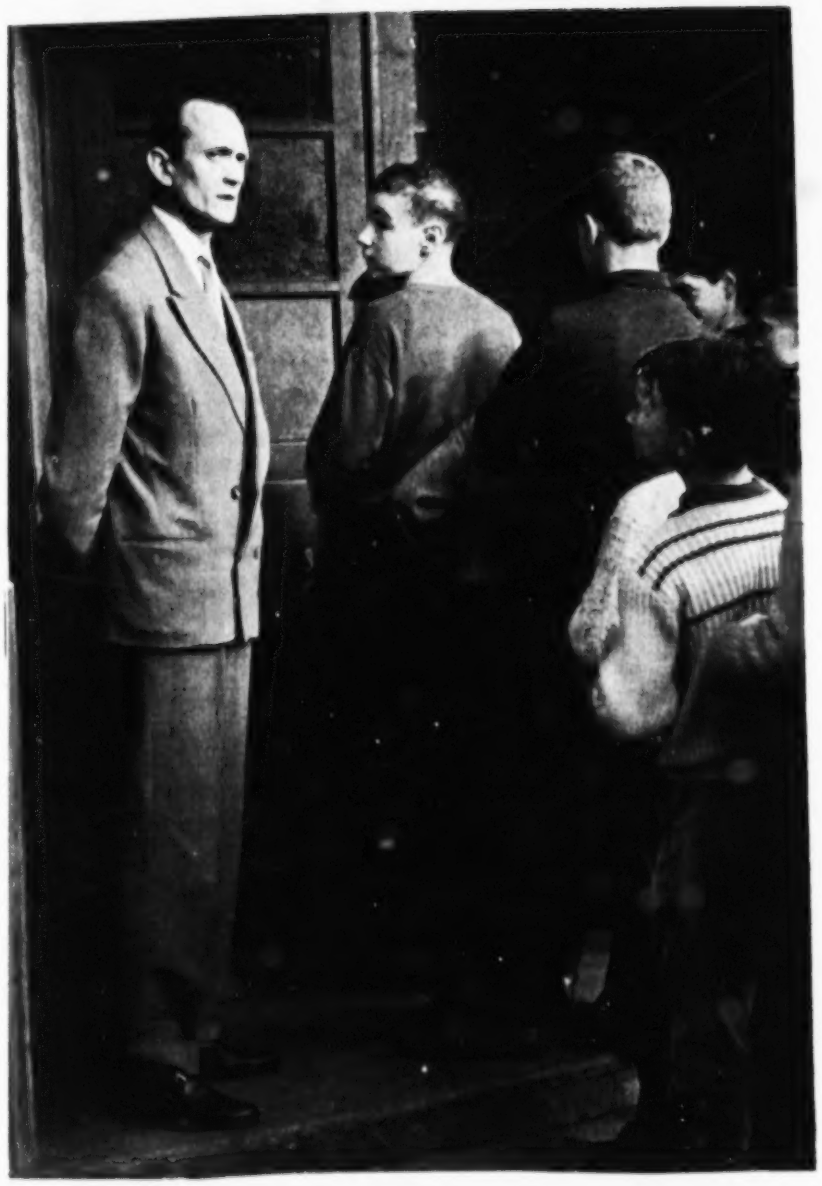
In the primary school, there is only one teacher, who teaches all subjects : reading and writing, spelling, history and geography, natural science, drawing and manual exercises. He must also be sufficiently artistic to teach music - the Certificate of Teaching Aptitude includes a singing lesson - and sufficiently athletic to teach physical education.

Instituteur (teacher), according to the dictionary, means "he who founds, who establishes". He builds the foundation for future education. Under the Third Republic, he was also a pillar of Republicanism and of the "free, obligatory, non-denominational school."

Until World War II, the majority of teachers came out of the Ecoles Normales, which have trained 70-80% of the primary teaching staff. One entered these schools following a severe examination after the tenth grade. The course of study leads to the "Brevet Supérieur", and the students received a serious professional training which included practice-teaching and study in the theory of education and child psychology.

Today the Ecoles Normales only provide 40% of the teachers, and their attitude is very different. Formerly, the girl or boy who entered were more or less committed to teaching at the primary level. With no "Baccalauréat", they didn't have the right to work toward the B.A. He or she remained a teacher all his life.

Now, one receives the "Baccalauréat" at the Ecole Normale, like anywhere else. Then follow two years of professional training. All of them may prepare a B.A., the Certificate of Aptitude in Secondary Teaching, or the Master's Degree, if they want to teach in high school or college. Hence, primary schools lose some of their best potential teachers.



The Substitutes

The profession is no longer a unified training program. The academic explosion of the last ten years, in increasing the number of pupils in primary school, has made the selection of teachers much less rigorous and created a new category of teachers : le Remplaçant (the Substitute).

They act as substitutes only during the first four years of their career. They find themselves teaching after a two-week initiation in a classroom with an experienced teacher. Later they study for 4 1/2 months at the Ecole Normale, and in the next two years, they will have learned their profession through practice. At the end of four years, they pass the Certificate of teaching Aptitude and will become certified teachers.

The recruitment of teachers is one of the major themes of the recent Conference of the National Teachers' Union. The NTU has always stressed the traditional organization of the Ecoles Normales. It now wonders if the transformation of the Ecoles Normales into "Centres de Formation Professionnelle" for all teachers - substitutes included - and the lengthening of their training, is compatible with the maintenance of the classes which prepares the Baccalauréat in the Ecoles Normales. "If the Ecoles Normales become high schools they will disappear. The creation of 'centers of professional training' will create a dynamic experience." The majority of the Union are willing to abandon the preparatory classes if the Ministry of Education agrees, in return, to lengthen the training period of the teachers, and in the near future to increase recruitment after the Baccalauréat and to undertake the training of substitutes. For the moment the question remains unanswered.

Sociological Profile of the Schoolteacher

Schoolteachers represent the largest number of employed people in France and they are increasing. There were 122,000 in 1906, and today there are almost 240,000.

Of this number, 164,000 are women. This is because, in part, of the institution of pre-school education, which employs women exclusively, and in part because of the salaries which are accepted more readily by women than by men.

It is a very diversified profession. The teacher has a choice of many different levels : kindergarten teachers, primary schoolteachers, Junior High School teachers, teachers of handicapped children, teachers in the Ecole Normales, Principals, etc.

The teaching profession has a militant political background which still exists, and which stems from the academic struggles which marked the Third and Fourth Republics. Nearly 86% of all teachers are members of the National Teachers' Union and others are probably members of other groups such as the French Confederation of Christian Workers, or the Headmasters' Union. The National Teachers' Union is unique in being autonomous and in not being part of the large workers' unions. This autonomy has made it a definite political force and its positions have affected the Socialist Party, in the presidential elections of 1965, for example.

Teaching used to be a prestigious profession, especially in the country, where it was comparable to that of the priesthood. Today this prestige has decreased somewhat. Instruction has lost its exciting and eyeopening aura. Even in the most remote provinces, there is television, radio, and newspapers. The teacher is no longer the sole source of information. Other "types" have taken his place, such as the butcher who has profited from the war, as is shown in the recent film **Le Boucher.**

The teacher, in spite of this change continues to be an important political force in the provinces, and to the south of the Loire he tends to be a Socialist. Out of 38,000 towns and villages, 12,000, usually rural, have a teacher acting as the Mayor's secretary.

THE GREAT FRENCH DEBATE - "LAICITE"

"L'enseignement en France est obligatoire gratuit et laique". This concept of "laicité", alien to American tradition and loosely translated as non-denominational, was the center of French political life throughout the nineteenth and on into the twentieth century. Today it still remains a touchstone of political life and it was a stumbling block in the attempts to federate the left-wing parties from 1945 to 1965. The violence of these reactions is explained by the evolution of education in France.

Until the revolution of 1789, French education was in the hands of the Church. The Catholic Church directed the schools. Its academic mission was affirmed time and time again in the papal Councils and generally approved by the royal power. Its hold was felt directly since most primary schools were in the hands of religious institutions, the Frères des Ecoles Chrétiennes being the best known, and indirectly since schoolmasters had to be approved by the priest and remained thereafter under the control of the local rector. They were chosen less for their skill - there was no teacher-training school anyway - than for their devotional qualities and religious education, which they were to pass to their students. "All those who present themselves for this post (schoolmaster) will bring a record of good conduct signed by the priest of the parish in which they served ... They will know their catechism by heart ... It will be forbidden for them to drink and eat in the cabarets of the town in which they live, to play the violin in public, to go to public dances ..."

1789 - first attempt at Secularization

The Revolution dedicated to secularizing all the schools in the country, tried also to secularize that part of education which it considers particularly important in the training of citizens. Church properties were confiscated. Religious orders were abolished. The public schools were put in the hands of the districts. But, in spite of some local successes, these reforms were never enforced. France was still profoundly Catholic, families were often hostile to these reforms, and, most important, there were not enough schoolmasters to replace the priests who were forbidden to teach.

The real secularization of education (a process fraught with violence) got under way in the nineteenth century.

From the beginning of the Third Republic, the gap was widening between the Church which had taken sides against the Republic and the Republican majority that was coming into power, Of the two enemies of the Republican Party, one, the royalty, was already beaten. Hence, the Republican Party tried above all to take away the allegedly dangerous power of the Church in the realm of education and to combat the religious orders. These two goals are really the same because the orders played such a large role in education that its reform was not possible without a conflict.

Un congrès d'instituteurs

Repressive measures continued to be effected throughout the nineteenth century. In 1889, priests were called into military service. Fiscal laws attacked the privileged situation of the orders. But the hardest blows fell in the years 1901 to 1906, when the pro-Dreyfus Republican bloc came into power after the majority of Catholics had taken a stand against Dreyfus. In 1904, the priests were refused entrance into the teaching profession. 2,500 establishments closed their doors. Minister Combes boasted a few years later that he had closed 13,000 parochial schools out of 17,000.

1914 and the Decline of Anticlericalism

The First World War created an opportunity to partially reintegrate the Catholics in France. Catholics, like Socialists, were united in the conviction that they were fighting for Justice and for civilization. A great number of priests were mobilized, ties of comradeship were formed between the men, and the spirit of anticlericalism began to diminish. At the same time, the government suspended measures against the orders.

Up until 1940, however, the educational question continued to weigh upon French political life, but in a rather obscure way. Its importance varied from one region to another. In Catholic Western France, in particular, there were cases of teachers harassed for their religious beliefs, and of families who were pressured into not sending their children to one school or the other. The local priest mistook his position in the parish church for an electoral rostrum. The mayor or the anticlerical administrator mixed the requirements of their official functions with politics or ideology. This only served to irritate the political sensitivity of both groups and inspired the feeling that Catholics were not the same as other French citizens.

The electoral situation today has come again to favor the Catholics. Under the Third Republic, the successive majorities in Parliament turned deaf ears to the Catholics' claims. But since the Second World War, there were enough Catholic deputies and senators to further their cause. This seems to derive, not from increased influence of Catholic forces in French political life, but from a relative disinterest on the part of left-wing forces toward a question that no longer seems as important as it was in the past.

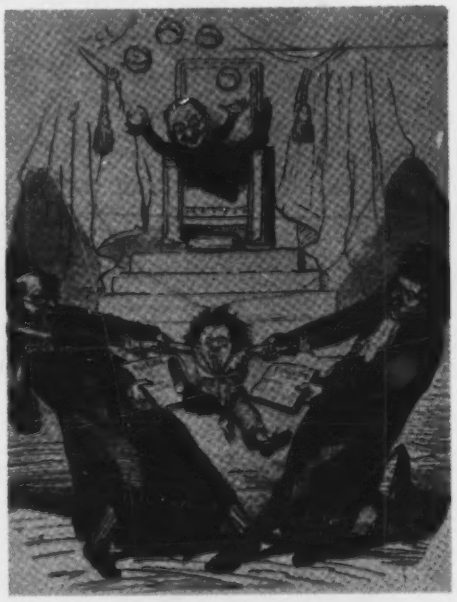
The Situation Today

The opposing sides are not so well-defined today, and the debate has shifted from principles to pragmatic considerations such as the financing of the parochial schools. Should they or should they not be subsidized by the State?

The Barangé Law of 1950, then the Debré Law of 1959, answered the question in the affirmative. Private establishments could have different types of contracts with the State which, in exchange for National Educational control over the programs and qualifications of the teachers, paid all or part of the educational expenses for the 1,800,000 students in the religious educational system.

The strength of the passions aroused by the secularization debate, and the philosophical and religious implications, have often obscured the quantitative and geographical facts necessary for a valid appraisal of the situation. Some figures may help to clarify the issue.

Today, 18% of the academic population go to private schools, in most cases parochial schools. In total, around 2,000,000 children attend private schools - mostly Catholic schools. In secondary education around 20% of the total of French students attend religious high schools.



These national statistics neglect an important characteristic of private education, which is regionalism. Thus 1/3 of the enrollment in the private elementary schools is localized in the districts of Brittany, Next comes the North, the West of France and the region around Lyons and the Alps. Paradoxically enough, the regions of Alsace and Lorraine where religious life is strong, have few religious primary schools. Of course, Alsace-Lorraine is a special case since part of it is still governed by the Concordat and was not affected by the separation of Church and State voted in 1905 when Alsace-Lorraine was still annexed to Germany. But the Meurthe-et-Moselle department (Nancy) which is not governed by the Concordat, is even more curious a case since in spite of a strong religious life, the parochial elementary schools educate only 7.5% of the students.

Thus as a political and ideological problem, the question of the parochial school and its financing is of varying importance in different parts of France. However, ideological solidarity still prevails. The cause of the parochial schools is vigorously defended by all Catholics and there is a bond between the primary school teacher in Dijon and his colleague in Brittany who is idolized in a clerical environment. However, there is no evidence of a rift in the nation and the gap has been closed between the two factions of the nation that faced each other at the turn of the century.

Manifestation anticléricale de Notre-Dame des Champs (1904)

LES INSTITEURS DE LA TROISIEME REPUBLIQUE

Fils d'instituteurs, Marcel Pagnol a évoqué avec tendresse les maîtres de la Troisième. Ces apôtres de la République, de la Raison, de l'anti-alcoolisme qui ont formé très largement et très profondément des générations de jeunes Français,

Les écoles normales primaires étaient à cette époque de véritables séminaires, mais l'étude de la théologie y était remplacée par des cours d'anticléricalisme.

On enseignait à ces jeunes gens que l'Eglise n'avait jamais été rien d'autre qu'un instrument d'oppression et que le but et la tâche des prêtres c'était de nouer sur les yeux du peuple le noir bandeau de l'ignorance, tout en lui chantant des fables, infernales ou paradisiaques.

Les normaliens frais émoulus étaient donc persuadés que la grande révolution avait été une époque idyllique, l'âge d'or de la générosité et de la fraternité poussée jusqu'à la tendresse : en somme, une explosion de bonté.

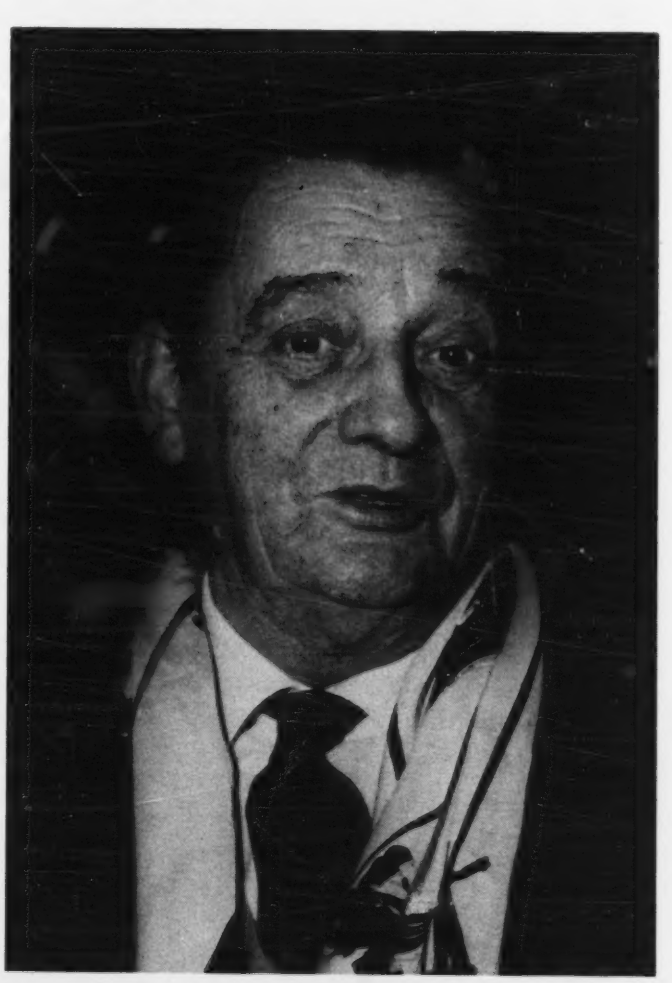
Je ne sais pas comment on avait pu leur exposer - sans attirer leur attention - que ces anges laïques, après vingt mille assassinats suivis de vol, s'étaient entreguillotinés eux-mêmes.

Il est vrai, d'autre part, que le curé de mon village, qui était fort intelligent, et d'une charité que rien ne rebutait, considérait la sainte Inquisition comme une sorte de conseil de famille : il disait que si les prélats avaient brûlé tant de Juifs et de savants, ils l'avaient fait les larmes aux yeux, et pour leur assurer une place au paradis.

Telle est la faiblesse de notre raison : elle ne sert le plus souvent qu'à justifier nos croyances.

Cependant, les études de ces normaliens ne se bornaient pas à l'anticléricalisme et à l'histoire laïcisée. Il y avait un troisième ennemi du peuple, et qui n'était point dans le passé: c'était l'alcool.

De cette époque datent *L'Assommoir* et ces tableaux effrayants qui tapissaient les murs des classes. On y voyait des foies rougeâtres, et si parfaitement méconnaissables (à cause de leurs boursouflures vertes et de leurs étranglements violets qui leur donnaient la forme d'un topinambour), que l'artiste avait dû peindre à côté d'eux le foie appétissant du bon citoyen, dont la masse harmonieuse et le rouge nourrissant permettaient de mesurer la gravité de la catastrophe voisine. Les normaliens, poursuivis, jusque dans les dortoirs, par cet horrible viscère (sans parler d'un pancréas en forme de vis d'Archimède, et d'une aorte égayée de hernies), étaient peu à peu frappés de terreur. A la vue d'un verre



Marcel Pagnol in 1968

de vin, ils faisaient une moue de dégoût. La terrasse des cafés, à l'heure de l'apéritif, leur paraissait une sorte de cimetière de suicidés. Un ami de mon père, ivre d'eau filtrée, en renversa un jour les tables, comme un Polyeucte laïque qu'il était. Mais ce qu'ils haïssaient le plus farouchement, c'étaient les liqueur dites "digestives", les bénédictines et les chartreuses, "avec privilège du Roy", qui réunissaient dans une trinité atroce l'Eglise, l'Alcool et la Royauté.

Au-delà de la lutte contre ces trois fléaux, le programme de leurs études était très vaste, et admirablement conçu pour en faire les instructeurs du peuple, qu'ils pouvaient comprendre à merveille, car ils étaient presque tous fils de paysans ou d'ouvriers.

Après quelques années d'apostolat laïque dans la neige des hameaux perdus, le jeune instituteur glissait à mi-pente jusqu'aux villages, où il épousait au passage l'institutrice ou la postière. Puis il traversait plusieurs de ces bourgades dont les rues sont encore en pente, et chacune de ces haltes était marquée par la naissance d'un enfant. Au troisième ou au quatrième, il arrivait dans les sous-préfectures de la plaine, après quoi il faisait enfin son entrée au chef-lieu, dans une peau devenue trop grande, sous la couronne de ses cheveux blancs. Il enseignait alors dans une école à huit ou dix classes, et dirigeait le cours supérieur, parfois le cours complémentaire.

On prêtre un jour, solennellement, ses palmes académiques ; trois ans plus tard, il "prenait sa retraite", c'est-à-dire que le règlement la lui imposait. Alors, souriant de plaisir, il disait :

"Je vais enfin pouvoir planter mes choux!"

Sur quoi, il se couchait et mourait.

J'en ai connu beaucoup de ces maîtres d'autrefois.

Ils avaient une foi totale dans la beauté de leur mission, une confiance radieuse dans l'avenir de la race humaine. Ils méprisaient l'argent et le luxe, ils refusaient un avancement pour laisser la place à un autre, ou pour continuer la tâche commencée dans un village déshérité.

Un très vieil ami de mon père, sorti premier de l'Ecole normale, avait dû à cet exploit de débuter dans un quartier de Marseille : quartier pouilleux, peuplé de misérables où nul n'osait se hasarder la nuit. Il y resta de ses débuts à sa retraite, quarante ans dans la même classe, quarante ans sur la même chaise.

Et comme un soir mon père lui disait :

"Tu n'as donc jamais eu d'ambition ?

- Oh mais si ! dit-il, j'en ai eu ! Et je crois que j'ai bien réussi ! Pense qu'en vingt ans, mon prédécesseur a vu guillotiner six de ses élèves. Moi en quarante ans, je n'en ai eu que deux, et un gracié de justesse. Ça valait la peine de rester là."

Car le plus remarquable, c'est que ces anticléricaux avaient des âmes de missionnaires. Pour faire échec à "Monsieur le curé" (dont la vertu était supposée feinte), ils vivaient eux-mêmes comme des saints, et leur morale était aussi inflexible que celle des premiers puritains. M. l'inspecteur d'Académie était leur évêque, M. le recteur, l'archevêque, et leur pape, c'était M. le ministre : on ne lui écrit que sur grand papier, avec des formules rituelles.

"Comme les prêtres, disait mon père, nous travaillons pour la vie future : mais nous, c'est pour celle des autres."

Marcel PAGNOL, *La Gloire de mon père*, Monte-Carlo, Editions Pastotelly, 1957, pp. 15-22.

BOURGES - THE MUSEUM AND THE SCHOOL

Mr. Favières, curator of the museums in Bourges, in conjunction with the school superintendent of schools, has decided to open, to a large extent, the museums to schoolchildren. He has even sent some carefully chosen museum pieces in packing cases to the schools so that the children can study them at length. He feels that one can begin to appreciate art at an early age.

There are two aspects of this project : museum tours and art loans. One elementary and one secondary teacher are employed part-time to welcome the children into the Jacques-Coeur museum in Bourges. They give guided tours as well as write guidebooks for the children. Pupils come as a class, accompanied by their teacher, and these visits are often preceded and followed by sessions of preparation and explanation. More than 3,000 elementary and junior high school visited the museum in 1969.

The "Packaged Exhibitions"

The lending of museum pieces is a revolutionary idea. The exhibitions sent to the schools are carefully packed and tagged to protect sculptures, documents, photographs and slides. Children may study these pieces at their leisure. Twelve suitcase expositions were devoted to pre-history and three to Egyptian art. Others are in preparation on stained glass windows. In 1968-1969, these expositions were used in 111 elementary schools and as many secondary schools, reaching 7,000 students in all. The museum also sends out three expositions which travel from school to school ("Posters and Images of the French Revolution", "Daumier and his Time", "French Drawing from Clouet to Daumier").

If cooperation between museums and schools is still rare, there are other currents which curators favor in other parts of France. Pieces are lent by the Blois museum and the Museum of Natural History in Paris. The Beaux-Arts Museum in Rouen organizes "cultural Thursdays". The Dijon museum has opened a special room for children of six to twelve years. The Blois Museum has created a traveling exposition on the "Cult of Napoleon" which includes seventy pieces. The Cantini Museum in Marseille has inspired many children, under the supervision of their teachers, to do original artwork, using an exposition of African art as a starting point.

After a session held last November, the Association of Curators of Public Collections expressed the wish that : "The possibilities of cooperation between museums and the schools be studied, and that, "the Minister of Cultural Affairs obtain the necessary means for local cooperation and support for cultural activities (museums, historical monuments, archeological digs, archives, houses of culture, and houses of culture for the young) which will work in conjunction with national education."

The museum does not have to be a substitute for school; it should remain, as writes the curator of the Melun Museum in conclusion to an inquiry into student visits to museums, "above all enjoyment, a game, a diversion. The trip to the museum is for many a great event, an outing they relish." But it can also be an integral part of the learning experience, an awakening to art, and a valuable creative stimulus.

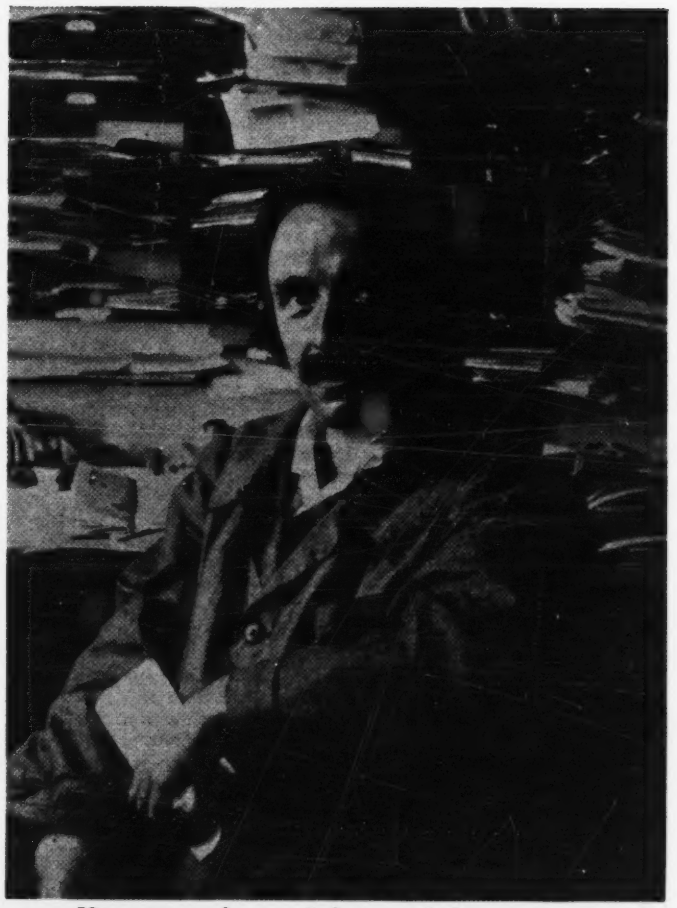
L'ECOLE FREINET

Even though new pedagogical methods are well-known today, there was a long period of experimentation and controversy when theoreticians were trying to perfect new theories and new teaching methods. Célestin Freinet, born in 1896, who taught all his life in village schools of the Alpes Maritimes, developed a teaching method based on the idea that discipline comes from the spontaneous and collective activities of the pupils.

This philosophy, which first aimed at stimulating schoolteachers, ended by creating a powerful movement with both practical and moral objectives. It was necessary to adjust the techniques and tools whereby the schoolteachers could resolve classroom problems, and to support these methods with a dynamic theory.

These techniques are now well-known : free choice of texts by pupils, a printing press in the school, a working cooperative in the classroom creating tools for a more individualized education, teamwork, workshops, and pen-pal clubs between schools. The philosophy rests on its appeal to the creative spontaneity of the child, the conviction that the schoolteacher is there to make the child aware of his potential. The Freinet pedagogy offers a means of emancipation.

His Public School Cooperative which produces the pedagogical materials developed by the Institut Cooperatif de l'Ecole Moderne (I.C.E.M.) has a budget of some two million dollars. Its publications, under the name of "Bibliothèques de Travail", send out booklets serving as a basis of information for pupils. They have now reached 700 issuee with 15,000 subscribers for the 11 to 15 year olds. Publications for the 6 to 11 year olds have 18,000 subscribers. A review, **L'Educateur**, informs its 5,000 monthly subscribers of the developments in the last thirty years during which methodology and doctrines have been continually adjusted.



However, the real force of the movement is found in its ideological cohesion. Each Freinet schoolteacher is conscious of being in the avant-garde of his field and of working for the transformation of educational processes.

After years of criticism or official indifference, Célestin Freinet saw his method recognized in 1957 by the Ministry of National Education and partly adopted in the "classes pilotes" at transitional grade levels. This was also confirmed by the recent reforms that give schoolteachers greater freedom to experiment.

The influence of Freinet's experimental classes has spread beyond France and they are today the most typical example of what can be achieved by methods of active education when applied with energy and patience.

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Bulletin du Syndicat National des Institutrices et Instituteurs.

L'Ecole Liberatrice - weekly newspaper of the Syndicat des Instituteurs et Institutrices - Ed. Classes Primaires - Dir. Pierre Chevalier, 94 rue de l'université, Paris 7.

Equipes Enseignantes - for Catholic teachers in public education - triannual - 18 rue Ernest Lacoste, Paris 12 - Dir. Gaston Bisson.

L'Ecole Maternelle Française - Ed. by Colin. 103 Bd. Saint-Michel, Paris 5. For teachers in the écoles maternelles; divided into three parts: general, pedagogical dossier, and job opportunities. Ed. M. Thivolet; founded in 1923.

L'Ecole et la Vie (monthly). Ed. by Colin, 103 Bd. Saint-Michel, Paris 5. Pub. by M. Estrade; educational revue composed of a general part and a pedagogical part; founded in 1917; circulation 40,000.

Journal des Instituteurs et Institutrices (bimonthly) - Ed. Nathan, 18 rue Monsieur le Prince, Paris 6. Pub. by A. Godier; founded in 1855; circulation 45,000.

LA CHRONIQUE DU LANGAGE

Dans un grand quotidien de Paris, on a pu lire (le 9 juin 1969) l'effarante assertion suivante: "Le vocabulaire traditionnel suffit à ceux qui savent leur langue".

A relire cette déclaration qui voudrait prendre le ton d'un axiome, on se demande comment il est possible de se former une idée aussi manifestement contraire à toute évidence. Quoi? Nous devrions nous ingénier à nous tirer d'affaire en utilisant uniquement les mots que nous fournissent nos dictionnaires, même en des matières qui n'existaient pas quand ils ont été redigés? Car, enfin, qu'est-ce que c'est que ce "vocabulaire traditionnel"? Celui qui a été recueilli par un Littré, un Larousse (et ses successeurs), un Robert, sans naturellement oublier le *Dictionnaire général* d'A. Hatzfeld et A. Darmesteter, si injustement ignoré par certains? Car il ne saurait être tout de même question de se contenter de ce que chacun a pu apprendre au cours de ses seules études et de ses seules expériences.

Parlons franchement. Invoquer le vocabulaire traditionnel est ambigu. Ou bien alors cela veut dire qu'il est interdit à quiconque "sait la langue" d'innover en matière de vocabulaire et, plus généralement, de produire une seule phrase qui n'ait été antérieurement déjà proférée ou écrite. C'est vouloir figer tout. Et qu'adviendra-t-il de la langue qui est perpétuellement en voie de changement? L'auteur de cet "édit" ne s'est pas avisé que les langues évoluent sans arrêt? Il faudrait "geler" le vocabulaire tel que nous l'avons trouvé. Autant précipiter un être vivant dans un froid intense pour le conserver tel quel. Mais à quelle fin? Un cadavre, aussi bien conservé qu'il soit, est-il autre chose qu'un cadavre? Et à quoi sert-il? A entretenir la piété de ceux qui se souviennent qu'il a été vivant? Alors, ce que l'on veut, c'est faire mourir le français tout de suite pour qu'il se conserve éternellement dans la forme et la corpulence qu'on a admirées au point de ne pouvoir s'imaginer qu'il puisse apparaître autrement? Cela revient à nous demander de nous suicider tous, non par le feu, mais par le gel qui fige tout.

L'insanité d'un pareil propos est telle qu'on pourrait croire qu'elle choquerait l'esprit le plus obtus. Hélas! c'est méconnaître l'aveuglement qui l'emporte presque toujours en matière de langage sur les évidences les plus tangibles. Il se trouvera, il s'est trouvé et il se trouve que de nombreux lecteurs en auront retenu qu'il faut à tout prix s'abstenir de fabriquer le moindre mot nouveau et qu'il faut aussi condamner tous ceux qui s'y hasardent et qui doivent passer pour des gens qui ne "savent pas leur langue".

Heureusement, les autres collaborateurs ou auteurs de ce même grand quotidien ne font pas faute d'innover chaque fois qu'ils en sentent le besoin. Nous nous sommes amusé à relever quelques-uns de ces néologismes. Nous les avons notés à partir de la même époque, approximativement :

"(...) *tandis que le candidat* AVIONNE *ou* HELICOPTE" (27-V-1969);

"(...) *il passe pour être le* CONCEPTEUR *des discours du candidat*" (6-ç8-69);

"(...) *une journée nuageuse.* CRACHINEUSE" (26-VIII-69);

"(...) *plagiste*" (27-VIII-69);

"(...) *reconduction des* MINORATIONS" (4-IX-69);

"(...) *boue* Fluante" (23-IX-69);

"(...) *un circuit* VIRAGEUX" (27-28-IX-69);

"(...) *les chiffres* TENSIONNELS *s'élèvent de façon insensible*" (9-X-69);

"(...) *les anciennes structures* FACULTAIRES (de l'enseignement supérieur)" (27-X-69);

"(...) (cette éventualité) *est difficilement* CREDIBLE" (21-XI-69);

"(...) *les gaz* OCCLUS *dans les métaux*" (24-XI-69);

"(...) *parc mètre*" (6-7-XI-69);

"(...) *borloge à ticket* HORODATE *(ibid.)*;

"(...) *tous les paramètres sont enregistrés par* TELEMESURE *sur une feuille* DEROULEUSE" (27-XII-69);

"(...) *un Mirage* INTRAPOLE" *(ibid.)*;

"(...) *l'histoire non* EVENEMENTIELLE" (3-4-I-70);

"(...) *frénésie* SUICIDAIRE";

"(...) *inerrance*" (expliqué par l'auteur de l'article sous la forme "c'est de ne pas se tromper") (12-I-70).

Comme nous n'avons pas déchiffré les numéros de ce quotidien jusque dans tous leurs recoins, il est vraisemblable qu'ils ont recélé bien d'autres néologismes. Nous n'avons noté que ce qui nous est tombé sous les yeux au gré des seuls articles que nous y avons lus. Notre dénombrement n'est pas complet, comme l'aurait désiré Descartes, dont se recommandent si volontiers les Français. Il n'en demeure pas moins que cette expérience porte en elle son enseignement. Il est tout simplement impossible de "dire" la vie de notre temps avec pour seuls moyens ceux que nous offre le "vocabulaire traditionnel". Cela rappelle l'embarras des néolatinistes qui ne savaient comment dire en latin *locomotive* ou *chemin de fer*, etc. Or, l'une des causes, entre autres, qui ont incité à l'abandon du latin comme langue auxiliaire des savants est précisément l'incapacité où l'on s'est trouvé de nantir le latin de moyens lexicaux suffisants en rafraîchissant son vocabulaire "traditionnel". Il est éloquent que les "conservateurs" du français nous proposent, faute de pouvoir nous l'imposer, de faire en sorte que le destin du latin devienne bientôt celui du français. Et cela ne traînerait pas, car les choses vont vite de notre temps.

L'attitude insensée de ces "défenseurs" arrogants qui protestent contre l'idée d'un dirigisme, mais exerceraient volontiers eux-mêmes la dictature pour empêcher tout changement, a ses raisons. Elles sont à chercher dans l'enseignement qu'ils ont reçu, plus particulièrement au lycée. Ils ont fait du latin et souvent du grec. Mais quel latin et quel grec! Leur latin, surtout quand on leur demandait d'écrire un thème, était le latin "cicéronien". Malheur à celui qui introduisait dans sa copie une locution lue dans saint Augustin ou qui sentait ce "latin d'église" qu'on méprisait, et quand on passait au thème grec il ne fallait pas sortir des règles de style que paraissaient avoir observées les grands Athéniens du siècle de Périclès. Tout ce qui était d'avant était entaché d'archaïsme et tout ce qui était venu après sombrait dans la "décadence". On ne se doutait pas que le "cicéronisme" avait sonné le glas du latin en Europe et que le pauvre Cicéron, érigé en modèle de conservatisme traditionaliste, avait, de son temps, enrichi le latin de bien des néologismes et non des moindres! L'ignorance est une belle chose, et à partir de ces prémisses erronées s'est formée l'idée qu'une langue, pour être "pure", doit se cristalliser dans les formes où il semble, à tort ou à raison, qu'elle ait atteint une sorte de sommet de sa faculté expressive. Pour ce qui est du français, on aurait volontiers choisi de la fixer dans sa forme du XVIIe siècle, celle des grands classiques, mais ils n'avaient pas encore assez "égalisé" la langue pour la rendre acceptable aux grammairiens épris de "logique", et l'on s'est contenté de prendre pour idéal celle du XVIIIe, plus particulièrement la prose d'un Voltaire, par exemple. C'était d'ailleurs, au temps lointain ou j'étais au lycée, l'écrivain qui incarnait la perfection aux yeux de mes maîtres et c'est celui qu'ils nous recommandaient d'imiter. Comme si l'on pouvait imiter Voltaire! Et même l'imiterait-on à la perfection que cela ne nous mènerait pas loin. Voltaire n'avait pas à dire ce que nous avons à dire et il aurait été le premier à se servir des mots qui lui auraient été nécessaires. Il ne se serait pas laissé ligoter par le respect du "vocabulaire traditionnel". Il suffit pour s'en convaincre de se reporter à la liste des mots que l'Académie française a admis à son époque; elle est assez imposante pour donner à réfléchir.

Non, nous ne laisserons pas mourir le français, notre langue. Nous ferons tout pour le nantir des équipements lexicaux, morphologiques et syntaxiques indispensables non pas seulement pour assurer sa survie, mais pour lui conférer plus d'efficacité et lui donner sa chance dans la compétition, où il faut qu'il maintienne au moins ses positions. Descartes, lui encore, affirmait que le bon sens est la qualité la plus répandue. S'il en est ainsi, il ne se peut pas que les Français se laissent paralyser par les interdits que promulguent des irresponsables que ne distingue que leur incompétene.

Aurélien SAUVAGEOT

SUMMARY OF THESES

M. Roger TRINQUET, LA JEUNESSE DE MONTAIGNE - SES ORIGINES FAMILIALES, SON ENFANCE ET SES ETUDES. Principal thesis for the Doctorat d'Etat. Defended at the Sorbonne on May 9, 1970. Published by A.G. Nizet.

This thesis, consecrated to the youth of Montaigne, is divided into three parts. In the first, the author studies the ancestry of the philosopher: the Gasconian origins of the Eyquem's as well as the family's access to the nobility; the religious and racial problems created by the maternal side of the family.

The second part is an in-depth study of Michel's childhood up to elementary school. The author here includes a careful study of his childhood in the country and his education in his father's castle. Pierre Eyquem's pedagogical principles are taken from Erasmus's treatise entitled "De pueris statim ac liberaliter instituendis" (1529) which recommends a very early instruction in classical languages (statim) *and the use of non-violence and gentleness* (liberaliter).

The third part follows Montaigne's life up through college. The pedagogy of the collège de Guyenne is analyzed in detail and some new facts are brought to light concerning the moral and religious atmosphere of this school. Montaigne finished his studies in Bordeaux, but after this his activities are obscured until he entered the Magistrature. It is probable that he spent quite some time in Toulouse studying law. Corroborative arguments, however, are still rather weak. On the other hand, it is almost certain that he did spend a long time in Paris around 1550-1555, when he studied under Turnèbe and Sylvius at the Collège Royal. Montaigne's being in Paris during the crucial adolescent years throws new light on his intellectual and philosophical background.

M. Jean Pierre COLLINET, LE MONDE LITTERAIRE DE LA FONTAINE. Thesis for the Doctorat d'Etat, Defended at the Sorbonne May 28, 1970.

This thesis, in treating genres, tone and themes, traces the development of La Fontaine's work. It is divided into two parts : 1) "Early Stages of Creation" and 2)"The Paths of Poetry".

La Fontaine began with a dramatic essay, "L'Eunuque", which lacks the humor of its model ("Terence"), but poses some essential problems of literary creation. With "Adonis" he turned toward heroic poetry and could not sustain it, but gave a brilliant illustration of his elaborate, flowery style and abundance of poetic tropes. His apprenticeship continued under Fouquet's patronage and he gave full rein to his imagination in his "Songe de Vaux". Poetry is brought to meet reality in the "Voyage en Limousin". Thereafter, he successively developed three new genres: 1) the courtly free verse tale, imitative of Ariosto; 2) the old-fashioned decasyllabic, ribald story inspired by Boccaccio, and 3) the fable, derived from Phraedra and Aesop.

The forms of the tale and the fable were brought together in "Fable contée en Prose" and "Psyché". Mixing three styles, the simple, the mediocre, and the sublime, La Fontaine experimented with the rhetoric of passion.

"Clymène" illustrates a very personal poetic style: also included are the four "Elégies" of 1671, which are similar to those of Maucroix. After that his work expanded with "Saint Malc" into the realm of religious poetry and with "Quinquina" into the realm of philosophical poetry. in the "Nouveaux Contes" and the second volume of the Fables, La Fontaine reached his full potential and was admitted to the Académie Française.

In general his works always have a logic of their own which gives them coherence and continuity. Inspiration and work combine to give them the unity of a completely original poetic creation.

M. Marcel GRANDPRE, LA COEDUCATION DANS LES ECOLES OFFICIELLES ET LES ECOLES CATHOLIQUES DE 45 PAYS, ENQUETE INTERNATIONALE D'EDUCATION COMPAREE. Thesis for the Doctorat d'Université. Defended at the Sorbonne June 29, 1970.

Based upon the inquiries of the Intermediary of the International Office of Catholic Education and the methods of Pedro Rossello, Assistant Director of the International Bureau of Education in Geneva, the author of this thesis concludes that there are four "undercurrents" in coeducation: 1) an economic one, which is the most important : coeducation is almost always instituted for economical reasons ; 2) a sociological one : economical motives are more easily applied when the social classes are mixed; 3) an idealogical one : ideas about mixing in society or schools and about the democratization of schools and of morals, etc. exercise a certain pressure that is rarely a determining factor; 4) a pedagogical one : pedagogical preoccupations have little bearing on administrative decisions; the educators who have done the most for coeducation are those from the "new schools" who feel that true coeducation requires more than a mixing of the sexes. As yet, there is no dialectic of coeducation.

When an educational system is just beginning to develop, the primary schools are small and mixed and boys enter sooner than girls. In view of such a disparity, the economy of coeducation becomes less and less necessary. The same holds true for terminal classes, which are small and mixed due to the many options at the end of secondary school.

Coeducation is almost complete at the preschool level. It diminishes perceptibly between preschool and primary school and between primary and secondary school in the state and Catholic school, and more noticeably in the latter than in the former. The rate of decrease is the same for handicapped children at the primary level and in professional schools at the secondary level. Finally, coeducation predominates in the universities.

M. Charles BENE, ERASME ET SAINT AUGUSTIN, OU INFLUENCE DE SAINT AUGUSTIN SUR L'HUMANISME D'ERASME. Thesis for the Doctorat d'Etat, defended at the Sorbonne on April 18, 1970.

Was Erasmus a heretic, or did he follow the teachings of the Church? Was he a humanist or an anti-humanist, as Benedetto Croce suggested? In order to answer these questions, one should turn, not to Origen or Jerome, his preferred masters, but to Saint Augustine. In the "Methodus", then later in the "Ration Verae Theologiae", he refers specifically to the "De Dectrina Christiana" of Saint Augustine. Erasmus used this work in 1494 to defend culture against the Barbarians. The same work also inspired the "Enchiridion Militis Christiani" and his last large work, "Ecclesiastes", published in 1535.

This "augustinism" influenced not only the theology, but also the humanism of Erasmus. It guided his choice of editions and inspired their prefaces. His literary tastes, his pedagogical ideas, his whole conception of culture were marked by the writings of Saint Augustine.